

INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT, U.S. & FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2004. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES.

This single chapter on business travel is excerpted from the 2005 (Fall 2004 Update) Country Commercial Guide for Morocco. The full text of the report is also available on this website.

## **CHAPTER 9: BUSINESS TRAVEL**

All US citizens traveling to Morocco are highly encouraged to check the Embassy's website at [www.usembassy.ma](http://www.usembassy.ma) for the latest travel information by following the link to American Citizen Services.

Furthermore, all Moroccans traveling to the U.S. need visas and except for diplomats, all must personally present themselves for an interview at the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca. Due to significant required procedural delays, everyone should apply well in advance of the planned departure date and should present a passport with at least six months validity remaining. It is wise to advise all Moroccan business partners of this delay before scheduling business meetings in the U.S.

### *Business Customs:*

Moroccan business customs reflect a mix of Arab and Mediterranean influences, rather than African. Rarely are there breakfast meetings, lunches tend to be late and long, and business meetings are most commonly held in offices, rather than over meals. Moroccan hospitality is world-renowned, and business contacts enjoy entertaining in their lovely homes. Business attire is similar to warmer climates in the U.S. It is often a good idea to reconfirm appointments in advance. While U.S. business people are encouraged to arrive at appointments on time, one should not be surprised at encountering delays, and it is wise to schedule meetings recognizing that some could start, or run, late. A growing number of young Moroccan entrepreneurs with degrees from American schools conduct business in English, but it is always a good idea to determine in advance the language to be used during the meeting, should it be necessary to hire an interpreter. Generally, business meetings are conducted in French. Moroccan women are becoming more involved in business activities. There is no difficulty for foreign women doing business or representing U.S. companies in Morocco. In fact, the former American Ambassador to Morocco, Margaret Tutwiler is a woman. Businesses are open Monday through Friday and sometimes Saturday morning. Most businesses close for lunch from noon to 2:00 p.m., except during the month of Ramadan, when they remain open at mid-day but close earlier in the afternoon. Morocco is a Muslim country. Consumption of alcohol during the fasting month of Ramadan is prohibited for Muslims only but others are encouraged to refrain from consuming alcohol during this month as well.

### *Travel Advisory and Visas:*

For current Travel Advisories, refer to [www.usembassy.ma](http://www.usembassy.ma) or to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). U.S. citizens and European Union member countries do not need a visa for entry into Morocco for up to 90 days. Entry visas are required for foreign nationals from certain countries, including Egypt, Iran, Sudan and Syria. In general, a tourist visa, which is valid for a period of three months, is the only type of temporary visa issued for Morocco.

### *Holidays in 2004:*

January 1                      New Year 2004

January 11	Presentation of Independence Proclamation
January 19	Martin Luther King's Birthday
February 1 & 2	Aid Al Adha (*)
February 16	President's Day
February 22	First Moharram (*)
May 2 & 3	Prophet's Birthday (*)
May 31	Memorial Day
July 5	American Independence Day
July 30	Feast of the Throne
August 20	Revolution of the King and the People
August 21	King's Birthday
September 6	American Labor Day
October 11	Columbus Day
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 14 & 15	Aid Al Fitr (end of Ramadan) (*)
November 18	Moroccan Independence Day
November 25	Thanksgiving Day
December 24	Christmas Day
December 31	New Year 2005

Note: Holidays with (\*) are based on the lunar calendar and change every year. Dates shown are those projected for the year 2005. As is the case in most Muslim countries, it may be more difficult to make business appointments and contacts in Morocco during the month of Ramadan, which will start this year at the beginning of October. It is also imperative to keep in mind that due to summer holidays during the month of August business comes to a virtual standstill.

*Time:* Morocco is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The country does not observe Daylight Saving Time. Time difference between Morocco and the East Coast is 5 hours and West Coast 8 hours during Standard Time months.

*Currency:*

The Moroccan currency unit is the dirham, abbreviated as DH. There are 100 centimes to each dirham. Bank notes are denominated in 200, 100, 50 and 20 dirhams. As of June 1, 2004, the average exchange rate to USD was 9.0 DH.

*Weights and Measures:*

The metric system is used in Morocco.

*Electrical Standards:*

Electric power in Morocco is 50 cycles, one and three phase, with nominal voltage in the largest cities at 220 volts.

*Business Structure:*

Several Moroccan laws govern companies operating in Morocco: Code of Commerce provides rules for businesses operated by companies or individuals; Stock Companies; Limited Liability Companies; Limited Partnerships; Partnerships Limited by Share; and Societies by Participation. Companies in Morocco may take the form of stock companies or limited liability companies. These forms are separate legal entities in which shareholder liability is limited to paid-in capital.

**Please Note:** Country Commercial Guides are available to U.S. exporters on the website: <http://www.export.gov>. They can be ordered in hard copy or on diskette from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) at 1-800-553-NTIS.

U.S. exporters seeking further recommendations for trade promotion opportunities in Morocco and country-specific commercial information may also wish to visit the website of the U.S. Commercial Service in Morocco at [www.buyusa.gov/morocco](http://www.buyusa.gov/morocco).

Travelers may wish to obtain the most recent travel advisory from the U.S. Department of State at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with their nearest **Export Assistance Center** of the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at (800) USA-TRADE, or go to one of the following websites: [www.usatrade.gov](http://www.usatrade.gov) or [www.tradeinfo.doc.gov](http://www.tradeinfo.doc.gov)

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date published. However, **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.